

What is claimed is:

1. A memory unit having a memory, a memory status indicator and a processor, wherein the processor monitors the status of the memory and communicates memory status
5 information to the memory status indicator.

2. A memory unit as set forth in Claim 1, wherein the memory status indicator is a display, an external display or at least one indicator light.

10 3. A memory unit as set forth in Claim 2, wherein the processor monitors write operations in the memory and determines when the number of write operations reaches a pre-determined number.

15 4. A memory unit as set forth in Claim 2, wherein the processor monitors remaining available capacity in the memory and determines when the remaining available capacity is less than a pre-determined amount.

20 5. A memory unit as set forth in Claim 2, wherein the processor monitors error frequency in the memory and determines when the error frequency reaches a pre-determined number.

25 6. A method of determining and indicating memory status, comprising the steps of:
calculating a value representative of memory usage;
comparing the calculated number with a pre-determined number; and
changing a memory status indicator when the calculated number reaches the pre-determined number.

7. A method as in claim 6, wherein calculating a value representative of memory usage comprises the step of calculating a total number of write operations performed in a memory.

30 8. A method as in claim 7 further comprising the step of transferring data stored in a memory location to a spare memory area when the calculated value of the respective address of the memory reaches the pre-determined number.

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9. A method as in claim 6, wherein calculating a value representative of memory usage comprises the step of calculating error frequency in a memory.

5 10. A method as in claim 9 further comprising the step of transferring data stored in a memory location to a spare memory area when the calculated value of the respective address of the memory reaches the pre-determined number.

10 11. A method as in claim 6, wherein calculating a value representative of memory usage comprises the step of calculating remaining available capacity in a memory.

12. A method as in claim 11 further comprising the step of transferring data stored in a memory location to a spare memory area when the calculated value of the respective address of the memory reaches the pre-determined number.

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